

REMARKS

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hodges

Claims 1-42 and 55-66 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hodges et al. ("Hodges") (U.S. Patent No. 6,272,882). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks.

Applicants respectfully suggest that the rejections of claims 1-42 and 55-66 have been rendered moot by Applicants' amendment of the present claims.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hodges in view of Newton

Claims 43-54 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hodges et al. ("Hodges") (U.S. Patent No. 6,272,882) in view of Newton ("Newton") (U.S. Patent No. 4,809,154). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks.

Applicants respectfully suggest that the rejections of claims 43-54 have been rendered moot by Applicants' amendment of the present claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action at page 4 indicates that claims 67 and 68 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants respectfully suggest that amended claim 1 includes the features of claim 67. Applicants also respectfully suggest that new claim 69 is similar to claim 68 rewritten in independent form.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Applicants further respectfully request entry and consideration of the above amendments and remarks to advance the above-identified application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLEM HUPKES, et al.

P.O. Box 2463
Houston, Texas 77252-2463

/Reece A. Scott/
Attorney, Reece A. Scott
Registration No. 41,297
(713) 241-7256